

EPA OSDBU DBE Program

At A Glance!

What is the EPA DBE Program and its Purpose?

The new EPA Disadvantaged Business Enterprise ("DBE") Program is a functional component of EPA's OSDBU. The program is an outreach, education, and goaling program designed to increase the participation of DBEs in procurements funded by EPA assistance agreements. The EPA DBE Program encompasses many of the components of the former MBE/WBE Program and includes many new features designed to decrease the compliance burden on EPA grant recipients.

The purpose of the DBE program is to ensure that small, minority, and women-owned businesses are given the opportunity to participate in procurement awards under EPA financial assistance agreements.

When Will the DBE Program Be Fully Implemented?

We expect that the final DBE Rule will be published in the Federal Register in November, with an implementation date in January 2008. Please note that the program changes presented during this conference will not go into effect until the rule is in effect, as indicated by the effective date provided with the issuance of the Federal Register Notice. Until the effective date of the rule, all current program requirements will remain in effect.

Why Does the Program Exist?

The program was mandated by Congress in response to the large number of procurement opportunities available through assistance agreements vs. contracts. At EPA, assistance agreement dollars are approximately four times as much as contract dollars. The statutory authority for the program is as follows:

Public Law 101-549, Nov 15, 1990 (Clean Air Act):

To the extent practicable, not less than 10% made available to DBEs.

Public Law 102-389, Oct 6, 1992 (Clean Water Act):

To the fullest extent possible, at least 8% made available to socially

and economically disadvantaged concerns, including HBCUs and women.

How We Achieve Our Purpose:

Recipients of EPA financial assistance agreements are **required to seek** and **encouraged to utilize** small, minority, and women-owned businesses for their procurement needs under the financial assistance agreement. This is done through the inclusion of terms and conditions in the financial assistance agreement referred to as the **“Six Good Faith Efforts”** and through the negotiation of **“Fair Share Objectives/Goals”**.

The Six Good Faith Efforts are designed to increase the participation of disadvantaged businesses in procurements under EPA financial assistance agreements. These efforts include creating smaller contract requirements and including DBEs on solicitation lists for procurements under EPA funded projects. The Six Good Faith Efforts are required to be followed when a financial assistance agreement recipient makes a purchase in any of the following categories: **Construction, Equipment, Services and Supplies**. The steps apply regardless of the amount of the grant award. The steps also apply to sub-recipients.

The Program requires that fair share objectives for Minority Owned Businesses (MBEs) and Women Owned Business (WBEs) be negotiated with the States and/or recipients. A fair share represents an amount of funds reasonably commensurate with the total project funding and the availability of qualified MBEs and WBEs, taking into account experience on EPA-funded projects and other comparable projects in the area. These objectives operate as goals, **not quotas**. There are no penalties imposed by EPA if the objectives are not met. Fair share objectives/goals are negotiated by EPA MBE/WBE coordinators, not by project officers.

The Team!

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